

What is claimed is:

1. (original) A method of moving a valve from a first stationary position to a second stationary position, comprising:

providing a valve and a valve seat against which said valve is adapted to be sealed, said valve having a drive shaft;

causing said valve to seal against said valve seat by forcing said valve towards said valve seat when said valve is in said first stationary position;

reducing the effect of said force in an amount sufficient to break said seal;

moving said valve to said second stationary position;
and

restoring the effect of said force to cause said valve to seal against said valve seat when said valve is in said second stationary position.

2. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the effect of said force is reduced by applying a counter-force to said valve.

3. (original) The method of claim 2, wherein said force and said counter-force are supplied with pressurized air.

4. (original) The method of claim 2, wherein said valve seat has an annular groove, and wherein said counter-force is applied by supplying pressurized air to said groove.

5. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein said force is applied with an electromagnet drawing said valve towards said valve seat, and wherein the effect of said force is reduced by de-energizing said electromagnet.

6. (withdrawn)

7. (withdrawn)

8. (withdrawn)

9. (withdrawn)

10. (withdrawn)

11. (original) A method of moving a valve from a first stationary position to a second stationary position, comprising:

providing a valve and a valve seat against which said valve is adapted to be sealed;

providing a supply of compressed gas;

biasing said valve against said valve seat to seal said valve when said valve is in said first stationary position

by supplying to said valve said compressed gas at a first pressure sufficient to create said seal;

breaking said seal by supplying said compressed gas to said valve at a second pressure less than said first pressure;

moving said valve to said second stationary position;
and

biasing said valve against said valve seat to seal said valve when said valve is in said second stationary position by supplying to said valve said compressed gas at a third pressure sufficient to create said seal.

12. (original) The method of claim 11, wherein said first and third pressure are about the same.

13. (original) The method of claim 11, wherein said valve comprises a hollow drive shaft, and wherein said compressed air is supplied to said valve through said hollow drive shaft.

14. (original) The method of claim 11, wherein said valve comprises a top surface having a plurality of apertures, and wherein said seal is formed by said compressed air flowing out said apertures and creating an air cushion between said top surface and said valve seat.

15. (withdrawn)
16. (withdrawn)
17. (withdrawn)
18. (withdrawn)
19. (withdrawn)
20. (withdrawn)
21. (withdrawn)
22. (withdrawn)
23. (withdrawn)